

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

1. (Currently Amended) A method for representing records, the method comprising:
 - receiving an order for a transaction at a record collection site;
 - producing a record that represents the transaction at the record collection site;
 - storing the record in a memory location at the record collection site;
 - assigning a unique identifier to ~~[[a]]~~ the record stored at ~~[[a]]~~ the record collection site;
 - entering the unique identifier in a hierarchical tree structure stored at the record collection site, wherein the unique identifier comprises information for accessing the record in the memory location, and wherein the tree structure comprises a plurality of branches connected by nodes; and
 - sending the hierarchical tree structure to a central storage site.
2. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1 further ~~[[comprises]]~~ comprising:
 - using the unique identifier to produce an aggregate report of records collected by the record collection site; and
 - sending the aggregate report to the central storage site.
3. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1 further ~~[[comprises]]~~ comprising:
 - using the unique identifier at the central storage site to access the record stored at the record collection site.
4. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the unique identifier includes information representing a node located in the hierarchical tree structure.
5. (Original) The method of claim 4, wherein the node is located in a higher position of the hierarchical tree structure than the unique identifier.
6. (Original) The method of claim 2, wherein using the unique identifier to produce the aggregate report includes counting the unique identifier with a

second unique identifier assigned to a second record stored at the record collection site.

7. (Original) The method of claim 2, wherein using the unique identifier to produce an aggregate report includes summing data included in the record accessed by the unique identifier with data included in a second record accessed by a second unique identifier.

8. (Original) The method of claim 4, wherein a unique key that includes information representing a second node in the hierarchical tree structure is assigned to the node.

9. (Currently Amended) A computer program product, recorded in a computer-readable storage medium comprising logic instructions which, when executed on a processor, cause the processor to: ~~tangibly embodied in an information carrier, for representing records, the computer program product being operable to cause a machine to:~~

receive an order for a transaction at a record collection site;

produce a record that represents the transaction at the record collection site;

store the record in a memory location at the record collection site;

assign a unique identifier to ~~[[a]]~~ the record stored at ~~[[a]]~~ the record collection site;

enter the unique identifier in a hierarchical tree structure stored at the record collection site, wherein the unique identifier comprises information for accessing the record in the memory location, and wherein the tree structure comprises a plurality of branches connected by nodes; and

send the hierarchical tree structure to the central storage site.

10. (Currently Amended) The computer program product of claim 9, further comprising logic instructions recorded on the computer readable storage medium which, when executed on the processor, cause the processor to ~~being further operable to cause a machine to:~~

use the unique identifier to produce an aggregate report of records collected by the record collection site; and

send the aggregate report to a central storage site.

11. (Currently Amended) The computer program product of claim 9, further comprising logic instructions recorded on the computer readable storage medium which, when executed on the processor, cause the processor to ~~being further operable to cause a machine to:~~

use the unique identifier at the central storage site to access the record stored at the record collection site.

12. (Original) The computer program product of claim 9, wherein the unique identifier includes information representing a node located in the hierarchical tree structure.

13. (Original) The computer program product of claim 12, wherein the node is located in a higher position of the hierarchical tree structure than the unique identifier.

14. (Currently Amended) The computer program product of claim 10, further comprising logic instructions recorded on the computer readable storage medium which, when executed on the processor, cause the processor to count ~~wherein using the unique identifier to produce the aggregate report includes counting~~ the unique identifier with a second unique identifier assigned to a second record stored in at the record collection site.

15. (Currently Amended) The computer program product of claim 10, further comprising logic instructions which, when executed on the processor, cause the processor to sum ~~wherein using the unique identifier to produce the aggregate report includes summing~~ data included in the record accessed by the unique identifier with data included in a second record accessed by a second unique identifier.

16. (Original) The computer program product of claim 12, wherein a unique key that includes information representing a second node in the hierarchical tree structure is assigned to the node.

17. (Currently Amended) A method for representing records, the method comprising:

- receiving an order for a transaction at a record collection site;
- producing a record that represents the transaction at the record collection site;
- storing the record in a memory location at the record collection site;
- assigning a unique identifier to [[a]] the record stored at [[a]] the record collection site;
- entering the unique identifier in a hierarchical tree structure stored at the record collection site, wherein the unique identifier comprises information for accessing the record in the memory location, and wherein the tree structure comprises a plurality of branches connected by nodes;
- sending the hierarchical tree structure to a central storage site; and
- receiving the hierarchical tree structure at the central storage site from a record collection site, the hierarchical tree structure includes the unique identifier assigned to a record stored at the record collection site.

18. (Original) The method of claim 17 further comprising: using the unique identifier to access the record stored at the record collection site.

19. (Original) The method of claim 17 further comprising: receiving an aggregate report at the central storage site produced at the record collection site using the unique identifier.

20. (Original) The method of claim 17, wherein the unique identifier includes information representing a node located in the hierarchical tree structure.

21. (Currently Amended) A method for representing records, the method comprising:

- receiving an order for a transaction at a record collection site;
- producing a record that represents the transaction at the record collection site;
- storing the record in a memory location at the record collection site;
- assigning a unique identifier to [[a]] the record stored at [[a]] the record collection site;
- entering the unique identifier in a hierarchical tree structure at the record collection site, wherein the unique identifier comprises information for accessing the record in the memory location, and wherein the tree structure comprises a plurality of branches connected by nodes;
- sending the hierarchical tree structure to a central storage site; and
- using the unique identifier at the central storage site to access the record stored at the record collection site.

22. (Original) The method of claim 21, wherein the unique identifier at the record collection site is used to produce an aggregate report that is sent to the central storage site.

23. (Original) The method of claim 21, wherein the unique identifier includes information representing a node located in the hierarchical tree structure.

24. (Currently Amended) A system comprising:

a record collection site that includes a computer system comprising logic instructions recorded on a computer readable storage medium which, when executed on computer system, cause the computer system to that assigns assign a unique identifier to a record stored at the record collection site and enter ~~[[enters]]~~ the unique identifier in a hierarchical tree structure; and

a central storage site that includes a computer system comprising logic instructions recorded on a computer readable storage medium which, when executed on computer system, cause the computer system to receive ~~that receives~~ the hierarchical tree structure from the record collection site.

25. (Currently Amended) The system of claim 24, wherein the computer system at the record collection site further comprises logic instructions recorded on a computer readable storage medium which, when executed on computer system, cause the computer system to use ~~[[uses]]~~ the unique identifier to produce an aggregate report and ~~[[initiates]]~~ initiate transmission of the aggregate report to the central storage site.

26. (Original) The system of claim 24, wherein the unique identifier includes information representing a node located in the hierarchical tree structure.

27. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, wherein assigning a unique identifier to a record stored at a record collection site comprises:

producing a record at the record collection site;

producing a unique identifier for the record to allow the record to be identified, distinguished and accessed from the record collection site;

assigning a unique identifier to the record so that the record is distinguishable from other records produced at the record collection site; and

entering the unique identifier assigned to the record into a tree structure which is also stored at the record collection site.

28. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 27, wherein tree structure identifiers are assigned to similar record types and are grouped together thereby improving accessibility for the stored records.

29. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 28, wherein the tree structure is produced with a database software package capable of storing data in a balanced tree structure.

30. (Currently Amended) The computer program product of claim 9, further comprising logic instructions recorded on the computer readable storage medium which, when executed on the processor, cause the processor to ~~wherein to assign a unique identifier to a record stored at a record collection site causes a machine to:~~

- produce a record at the record collection site;
- produce a unique identifier for the record to allow the record to be identified, distinguished and accessed from the record collection site;
- assign a unique identifier to the record so that the record is distinguishable from other records produced at the record collection site; and
- enter the unique identifier assigned to the record into a tree structure which is also stored at the record collection site.

31. (Previously Presented) The computer program product of claim 30, wherein tree structure identifiers are assigned to similar record types and are grouped together thereby improving accessibility for the stored records.

32. (Previously Presented) The computer program product of claim 31, wherein the tree structure is produced with a database software package capable of storing data in a balanced tree structure.

33. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 17, wherein assigning a unique identifier to a record stored at a record collection site comprises:

- producing a record at the record collection site;
- producing a unique identifier for the record to allow the record to be

identified, distinguished and accessed from the record collection site;
assigning a unique identifier to the record so that the record is distinguishable from other records produced at the record collection site; and
entering the unique identifier assigned to the record into a tree structure which is also stored at the record collection site.

34. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 33, wherein tree structure identifiers are assigned to similar record types and are grouped together thereby improving accessibility for the stored records.

35. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 34, wherein the tree structure is produced with a database software package capable of storing data in a balanced tree structure.

36. (Currently Amended) The system of claim 24, wherein a record collection site that includes a computer system that further comprises logic instructions recorded on a computer readable storage medium which, when executed on computer system, cause the computer system to ~~assigns a unique identifier to a record stored at the record collection site and enters the unique identifier in a hierarchical tree structure comprises:~~

[[producing]] produce a record at the record collection site;

[[producing]] produce a unique identifier for the record to allow the record to be identified, distinguished and accessed from the record collection site;

[[assigning]] assign a unique identifier to the record so that the record is distinguishable from other records produced at the record collection site; and

[[entering]] enter the unique identifier assigned to the record into a tree structure which is also stored at the record collection site.

37. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 36, wherein tree structure identifiers are assigned to similar record types and are grouped together thereby improving accessibility for the stored records.

38. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 37, wherein the tree structure is produced with a database software package capable of storing data in a balanced tree structure.